"He was accosted by a man of a grave and venerable appearance." Page 15.

THE

FOREIGN VISITANT:

CONTAINING

INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS
AND REMARKS, MADE BY AN INHABITANT

OF

TERRA INCOGNITA,

ON THE

CHARACTER AND MANNERS OF THE INHABITANTS
OF THIS EARTH;

PARTICULARLY IN RELATION TO THE

LORD'S DAY.

SECOND EDITION, WITH ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS.

BOSTON:

Printed for the Proprietor, by T. B. Wait & Sons.

1814

DISTRICT CLERK'S OFFICE.

DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS TO WIT:

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"The Foreign Visitant; containing interesting observations and remarks, made by an inhabitant of Terra Incognita, on the character and manners of the inhabitants of this earth; particularly in relation to the Lord's day. Second edition, with alterations and additions."

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WILLIAM S. SHAW,
Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.

THE VISITANT.

An inhabitant of some distant and unknown part of the universe, is supposed to visit this earth, with the view to make himself acquainted with the characters, the manners, and the customs of the inhabitants. He arrives on the first day of the week in which secular business is performed. In the place where he arrives, he finds the people in plain, but decent and cleanly apparel, and diligently employed in a variety of occupations, while health and contentment are visibly marked on their countenances. Some are at work in their fields, cultivating the soil; some are engaged in making and improving roads, fences, bridges, &c.; some in different branches of the manufacturing and mechanic arts; some in mercantile employments; and a small number in the

practice of law, of physic, and of instructing children and youth. The practitioners in law and physic he soon finds are not pressed with business, as but few controversies exist among the people, and as their temperance and industrious habits preserve them, in a great measure from the attack of sickness; and the instructers of children and youth, he observes with much satisfaction, are assiduous in their endeavours to instruct their charge as well in the principles of sound morality and religion, as in the elements of literature.

The women, he notices, are generally engaged in pursuits different from those of the men, and that they are not less industrious. Some put their hands to the spindle; some lay hold of the distaff; some are busily engaged in their looms; some in a variety of useful needle work; some in providing food for their households; all are employed in some domestic and suitable business. In addition to these occupations, some, he notices, are travelling in the streets, in carriages, on horseback, or on foot, either for amusement, for social intercourse with their

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friends, or for the transaction of their necessary concerns.

In most of the families which he visits, the Visitant notices a collection of books, neatly arranged in a small case, upon a shelf, or in some other convenient place. These, upon examination, he finds well calculated to impart rational amusement and interesting and important instruction. Among them he seldom if ever fails to discover one, which they call, *the Bible*. These little libraries he finds are not for *show*, but for *use*. The Bible, and some other useful books are daily read, sometimes by an individual, while the others listen with attention; and at other times, most of the members, when not engaged in other pursuits, are seen reading silently to themselves. In their social visits, he finds, that their time is employed, not in warm and intemperate disputes, either about religion, or politics, or any other subject; and that their conversation does not turn upon subjects of scandal, balls, and assemblies, fashions, and dissipating amusements; but upon subjects, calculated to improve their minds and

their hearts; to cherish the social, and religious affections, and to promote the best interest of the individual and of society; nor is it unfrequently the case that they meet together, expressly for the purpose of spending an hour in social prayer, reading the scriptures, or some other serious and instructive book, for religious conference, and for admonishing one another in *psalms*, and *hymns*, and *spiritual songs*. Such are the principal employments in which he finds the people of the place diligently engaged, during the six first days of his visit.

But no sooner does the seventh day arrive (the day which succeeds the six days of labor) than the Visitant finds, to his surprise, that the inhabitants suspend the principal employments in which they had been engaged. Although awake, active, and in the enjoyment of health, they immediately cease from their accustomed labors and pursuits. Seasonably, in the morning, he finds the families assembled together, in their several habitations, when the heads of the families, whether men or *women*, devoutly read a portion of the

Bible, and then take the lead in solemn prayer, and supplication, together with thanksgiving, to God. During these exercises all are engaged, and seem deeply interested. This employment, however, did not excite so much surprise in the Visitant, as he had witnessed the same the six preceding days. But his surprise chiefly arose from observing that the principal occupations in which they had been engaged on the other days were suspended, and that nothing of labour was done but what necessity and mercy seemed to require. The Bible, he observes, is *now* the principal book, which the families are engaged in reading; a book which he finds treats of the being and perfections of God, of his laws and government, of the relations in which men stand to him, and of the obligations which result from those relations. This book he also finds, treats of man's apostacy, and of the method of recovery from it by Jesus Christ, the Almighty Saviour; in a word, that it treats of the most important, sublime, and interesting subjects. This book he observes is read with the deepest interest, and most

devout attention, while newspapers, and political pamphlets, or such as relate to the concerns of the present world, are wholly laid aside. He also observes that their conversation is wholly turned on subjects of everlasting moment. No vain and trifling words proceed from their lips, but such only as are grave, seasoned with salt, and adapted to minister grace and important instruction to the hearers. When not otherwise engaged, he finds them employed in secret devotions, or in that solemn meditation, which indicates that their thoughts are raised *above* earthly objects, and that their affections are placed on invisible and eternal things.

Having noticed that the inhabitants were engaged in these and other similar employments, from an early hour on this day, till the sun had ascended almost midway the heavens, he was surprised to find them better attired than had been usual on the preceding days, and that in thus attiring themselves they had spent but a small portion of their time, and with little or no noise, bustle, or parade. Being thus attired, he observed them issuing,

nearly at the same time, from their doors, travelling from all quarters in a serious and solemn manner, to a capacious and decent building, which they call *the house of God.* Struck with the novelty, and impressive solemnity of the scene, he mingled with the throng, which consisted of all ages; *all* who were able to leave their homes, and repaired with them to the house of general resort. Here he finds nothing said, nothing transacted of a worldly nature. The Bible which he had observed was so much used in their private dwellings, is the principal book for their instruction in the house of God. He notices that one man in an elevated situation, and apparently devoted to the work, leads the devotions of the assembly, and communicates instruction from the Bible. Deeply affected himself, with the solemn transactions in which he is engaged, his grave and impressive manner, deeply affects his attentive audience. No levity of conduct; no vacant gaze; no curious eye; no *drowsiness;* no indifference is to be seen. All is decorum, decency, solemnity, and devotion. In the course of

the interesting transactions, numbers unite their melodious voices in uttering the memory of the divine goodness and mercy. After a considerable time spent in these exercises, he observes, that the assembly retire from the house of God, in a decent and solemn manner, to their respective habitations, to the habitation of others in the vicinity, or to the covert of shady trees, for the purpose of refreshing their bodies. During this repast and retirement they held converse on the interesting things they had heard in the house of God, not however with a cavilling and captious disposition, but with the spirit of meekness and wisdom; with a view to mutual improvement in knowledge, in the religious affections, and in practical piety; with the view to each others consolation and assistance in the way to the New Jerusalem, the city of the living God. Having thus refreshed the *inner*, as well as the *outward* man, the dispersed assembly return from the several places of their retirement to the house of God, where the foreign Visitant finds them again employed in the same exercises in which

they had before been engaged, and with the same interest and solemnity; nor is the number of worshippers diminished. These exercises concluded, he notices, that the assembly leave the house of God, not with precipitation, as if they were wearied with their confinement and services, but *slowly*, and with a sedate and solemn aspect. And thus they return to their own houses, conversing with each other by the way, upon the things which they had heard from their beloved instructer, and upon such other subjects as were calculated to impress their minds with eternal realities, and to raise their souls to God. Nor are their religious exercises terminated when they arrive at their own dwellings. Here they find employment to the close of the day in the exercises of piety and devotion, in reading the Bible and books of a religious nature, in social and secret prayer, in serious and devout meditation, attended with pious and appropriate instruction communicated by parents to their children.

Such was the surprise excited in the mind of our Visitant that with eagerness

he inquires, What mean ye by the exercises of this *distinguished* day? Whence is it that ye lay aside your usual employments of a worldly nature on this day, and devote it wholly to the things and service of God?—To these inquries it is replied; God, the Creator of all things has commanded, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do *any* work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven, and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it." This day, the Lord our God challenges as his *own*, and has commanded that we "turn away our foot from doing our own pleasure:" that we "call the *sabbath*, a *delight*, the holy of the Lord, *honourable*;" and that we honour him, not doing our own ways, nor speaking our own words. To heark-

en to this command, we feel ourselves to be under the most sacred obligation. One day in seven, therefore, we observe in this manner; and this we esteem a most delightful, as well as reasonable service.

At this, the foreign Visitant, with devout fervor and holy energy exclaims; How admirably adapted is the religious observance of this day to excite in the soul emotions of gratitude, of love and of reverence, to the great Lord of the sabbath, to abstract the mind from the cares, and entanglements of the world, to spiritualize the affections, to enkindle a holy zeal, to communicate consolation to the heart, to stimulate all the powers both of body and soul to vigorous exertion in the divine service, and to prepare men for the joys and employments of God's temple above! Surely all, who feel their dependance upon Him, who blessed the sabbath day, and sanctified it; all who feel their obligations to him, revere his authority and love his character, must call the sabbath a *delight*, and esteem it, the *holy of the Lord, honourable*; they must indeed welcome this "sweet day of rest,"

of devotion, of sacred service. My wonder ceases, that you should regard it thus.

The Visitant adds, I heard the venerable man who led in your public devotions, and who, with so much solemnity and engagedness instructed you from the Bible, read with peculiar emotion and emphasis, this interesting passage "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotton Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.*" These words seemed to be the foundation of his whole discourse, in which great and marvellous things were brought into view. I received the idea that this world was originally in a better state than at present; that the progenitors of your race were, at their creation, in a state of perfect purity, and very high enjoyment; that by sin or disobedience, they soon forfeited, and lost that happy situation, and that their descendants are now, and ever have been since the fall, in a state of sin and condemnation; that in consequence of this apostacy, God the Father was pleased in great mercy to give up his well-beloved Son, to be made in

the likeness of men, and to die in their behalf; that God the Son, having life in himself, was pleased to unite human nature with his essential divinity, and submit to an ignominious death, by which a way was prepared for the deliverance of men from condemnation in this world, and from everlasting shame and contempt, and that they might be restored to the favour of God here, and be admitted to the full and blissful enjoyment of him, hereafter, for ever; and in fine, that all who should return from their apostacy and become his obedient and faithful servants, should, on account of what the Eternal Son had done and suffered for them, obtain this unspeakable and everlasting favour." "These," continued the Visitant, "were the leading ideas, communicated by the venerable man of God, if I correctly understood his meaning, and they filled me with sentiments of astonishment and delight."

To this it was replied, "You rightly understood the ideas which it was meant should be conveyed. These ideas however are but mere sketches of the history

of *redemption.* Who can comprehend the person of Emanuel? Who can unfold the great mystery, God, manifest in the flesh, the very *brightness* of the Father's glory veiled in humanity, and submitting to the death, to magnify the broken law of God; to save rebels from the sentence of eternal damnation, and fit them for eternal life! These are things which the angels *desire to look into,* but can never fully comprehend! They are things, which the boldest imagination can never reach, which wholly baffle the powers of the most penetrating created mind. It is sufficient for us to know, that a foundation is laid in the blood of Christ for the pardon of sin, on the exercise of repentance towards God, and faith in the Eternal Son, for a restoration to the divine favour, and admission into future glory.—But it is carefully to be remembered, that repentance, and faith, imply the keeping of the commandments."

"Jesus Christ, after his crucifixion, continued under the power of death, but for a short season. On the third day he rose

triumphant. As this is the day of the week on which his resurrection occurred, it is the day observed by us, as the sabbath of rest from our worldly employments, in commemoration of that joyful and stupendous event." On hearing this, our Visitant with rapture exclaims, *Illustrious day!* who, that duly appreciates the glorious work of redemption, who, that feels his obligations to the Divine Redeemer, but must greatly rejoice in this day, call it a delight, and keep it holy unto the Lord!

As it was the object of our Visitant, when he first alighted on the earth, to make critical observations on the character and conduct of men, so, from what he had already witnessed, particularly in relation to the sabbath, he found his desire increased to pursue the object of his visit. He had formed a very high opinion of the religious character of the inhabitants of the place, which had been the scene of his observations, from their general employments and habits, and especially from their strict and devout observance of the sabbath. And, as these ob-

servations had been to him a source of high enjoyment, he determined to tarry longer on the earth, and extend his visits to other places, and other inhabitants, expecting to find in them the same traits of character, he had already discovered, and to derive from them the same satisfaction he had derived from those which had already arrested his attention.—He accordingly conveyed himself on the wings of the wind, to a place at a considerable distance, which exhibited a more pleasant and inviting appearance, on some accounts, than the place he had just left.

Similarity of habits on working days, generally marked the character of the inhabitants. They were diligent, he observed, in their pursuits, which were various, and in many respects of like kind with those he had noticed in the place which he had lately left. They appeared, however, to be more wealthy; to be more engaged in traffic; to carry on their business on a more extensive scale; to pursue the professions of law and medicine to a greater extent; to be more polished in their manners, and to live in higher

style. Their social visits, he observed, were more formal and attended with more parade; and their manner of communication with each other in their social circles was less interesting, and less instructive, as subjects of the highest importance, those which respect the soul and a future state of existence, were seldom introduced as topics for conversation. And when this *was* the case, he noticed that they appeared but little interested, and that their conversation was *languid* and formal, unless it bordered on levity, or was enlivened with witticisms, which seemed to our Visitant very unsuitable to the solemnity of the subjects. He observed further, that when conversing on matters of religion, they appeared to have a very high opinion of themselves in a religious view, and to discover little or no humility on account of their apostate and sinful condition. They appeared indeed not to be sensible that their minds were naturally enmity against God, and that they were deserving of his everlasting displeasure. Nor did they scruple even to ridicule some of the religious

opinions and practices of the inhabitants of the place, of which our Visitant has already given an account. Instead of occasionally assembling together in the evenings, or at other times on their working days, for reading the Bible and books of piety, for social prayer, singing *psalms* and *hymns* and *spiritual songs*, and for religious conference, he noticed that their meetings were at the theatre, the ball, and exhibition room; and at other places where scenes of levity, vain amusements and conviviality, in its multifarious forms, were exhibited.

These strong shades of difference in the habits and pursuits of the inhabitants of this place from those of the inhabitants of the place which he first visited, occasioned our Visitant no small disappointment, as he had expected a much greater uniformity of character and pursuit among the inhabitants of the earth. And not only was he disappointed, but he was led to doubt, whether the inhabitants of both places were of the same species; whether they professed to worship the same God, and to take the same Bible for

the rule of their faith and practice. This doubt instead of being removed was greatly strengthened, when he had more particularly investigated their religious character; for he found that many of them did not maintain even the form of religion in their closets or in their families. In some of the families indeed he observed, that social prayer was occasionally, but seldom maintained, and in others on the morning and evening of each day with great *formal* exactness. But in these, their devotional exercises, he discovered but little confession of unworthiness and guilt; for they did not suppose they deserved everlasting misery; saw little or no appearance of a contrite spirit, and broken heart; heard but few petitions for pardon, and these offered in so lifeless a manner, as to furnish much evidence that the petitioners did not consider themselves as having really offended their Maker. He noticed, indeed, that in their devotional exercises, they uttered many expressions indicative of the high sense they had of their love to God, of their gratitude to him, of the integrity and up-

rightness of their hearts and intentions, and of the many duties to God they had faithfully performed, and acts of charity to men. In a word, their prayers seemed rather as eulogiums on themselves, than humble confession and petition to God; for they did not scruple to vaunt, that they were not like *other men*, and particularly the men of the place which our Visitant had lately left.

Another circumstance which arrested his attention, was, that the *Bible*, which he found in most of the families, appeared quite unsullied; he knew not at first how to account for it, but observation soon satisfied him, that it was owing to its being seldom used.

These things rendered the situation of our Visitant unpleasant, filled his mind with doubtful musings, and made him desirous to leave the place. But as he had not yet witnessed the manner in which they observed the sabbath, and feeling a strong inclination to satisfy himself in this particular, he resolved to protract his visit, till that day should have passed. He accordingly waited with impatience for its

arrival, indulging the hope that the appearance of the inhabitants on their *holy day*, would be more pleasing and satisfactory. The sabbath at length arrives; but, to disappoint his hope. He finds a large portion of the morning of this day spent by many of the inhabitants in sleep, or indolently in their beds. The remainder of the morning, till the time for their assembling at the house of God, is spent in preparing and taking their morning repast; in splendidly attiring themselves for the public religious services of the day; in conversation about the weather, and in desultory observations on subjects unconnected with religion, and reproachful to them as professing christians—Some of them, indeed, he notices, find time to read a portion of the Bible, and to unite in social prayer. But, as on preceding days, these services are performed in so indifferent a manner, or with so much self complacency, and ostentatious parade, as to exhibit little or no evidence of their being acceptable to God, or beneficial to themselves.

The time for their assembling in the

house of God arrives, whither the inhabitants in splendid apparel now direct their course, either on foot or in elegant carriages. Contemplating on their appearance, and listening to their conversation, our Visitant exclaims to himself, Can these people be going to the house of God? Is it their object to bow and kneel before God their maker, and worship him in the beauty of holiness! Are their hearts attuned to solemn prayer, devout praise, and to the instructions of God's word! Were it not that this is their *holy day*, and this their house of religious worship, well might it be believed that they were entering the theatre, or some place of amusement.

Soon, however, they enter the house of God. The public services commence. They are *quickly* over. In *form*, they resemble those which our Visitant had witnessed on the preceding sabbath; but how faint is the resemblance in the solemnity, the awakened, diligent, and anxious attention of the worshippers! The man who led in the devotions of the assembly, and who instructed them, appear-

ed widely different, both as to matter and manner, from the man who officiated on the preceding sabbath. In prayer, he appeared less devout, less humble and impressive. The discourse which he delivered, and which he said was from, or agreeable to the Bible, scarcely *referred* to man's fallen and ruined state; to his redemption by the sufferings and blood of Christ; or to the subjects of repentance and faith as the condition of salvation. His discourse consisted principally in observations recommending the culture of the social affections, the discharge of moral obligations, and the performance of religious duties. But the character of these observations was so general, so vague, and indistinct, that the Visitant could hardly conjecture what was their object; whether they were intended for the benefit of his hearers in this world only, or whether they had a bearing on their future welfare. He would have concluded the discourse had no reference to a future state of existence had it not been, that toward the close of it, he observed to his hearers, that if they would

do these things they should never fall, but that God would be well pleased with them, and give them a rich and everlasting reward in heaven. Such was the *matter* of his discourse. His *manner*, however graceful it might appear to his hearers in general, was to our Visitant far from pleasing. It exhibited none of that simplicity, gravity, and impressive solemnity, which becomes the ambassador of God to sinful men. The speaker, in short, appeared but little interested in his subject; and the feeling which it excited in his hearers, seemed to be as little, and even less than his own. None seemed to be much affected by what they had heard, nor indeed to understand it, for his discourse was but a desultory harangue, *about* moral and religious things, undefined, unexplained, and unapplied.

The exercises of the afternoon excited more attention, and awakened more interested feelings in the audience. This appeared to be occasioned partly by the *subject*, and partly by the *manner*, of the preacher's discourse. The subject had sometimes a bearing upon superstition,

sometimes upon bigotry, sometimes upon enthusiasm, sometimes upon fanaticism, sometimes upon metaphysics, sometimes upon meetings for prayer and religious conference, on working days or the evening of such days, and sometimes upon hypocrisy and religious grimace. With these names and things our Visitant had not been so conversant, as fully to understand their nature and import, or to comprehend the design of the preacher. But he afterwards learnt the discourse was meant to be levelled at the religious sentiments and practices of the inhabitants of the place which he had first visited. In his *manner*, the preacher discovered much zeal and engagedness, which seemed to border on spirited resentment. He closed his discourse by warning his hearers with great energy, carefully to avoid the bad things which he had enumerated, as evils more to be dreaded than the sword, famine, or pestilence!

Such were the public exercises of the day. Not only did our Visitant notice them with a scrutinizing eye, and attentive ear, but with grief and sorrow of

heart! Great indeed was the contrast between these exercises and those which he had witnessed on the last sabbath. Nor less striking does he find the contrast between the appearance and *conduct* of the inhabitants of this place, and the appearance and conduct of the inhabitants which he first visited, during that portion of the day which was not devoted to public worship. The inhabitants of the place which he first visited, it has already been noticed, made it their object to spend the whole of the day in devotional and appropriate exercises.

And here it may be worthy of special remark, that believing the sabbath to commence at the setting of the sun; on the last of their working days, they suspended all labour but that of necessity and mercy at that time. So scrupulous were they to begin the sabbath at the setting of the sun, that they made vigorous exertions *seasonably* to accomplish all their worldly business, which required their attention, before the sabbath should commence, or the sun go down. But the inhabitants of the place where our

Visitant now is, fix the commencement of their sabbath at midnight, and consider it as closing at the midnight next following. Why the sabbath should be thus differently limited by people who have the same Bible, and who profess to obey its laws, our Visitant could not at first conjecture, and especially as the law of the sabbath expressly requires that the day should be kept holy *from* evening *to* evening. Nor could he fully satisfy himself upon this point. His conjecture however was, that the inhabitants of the place which he first visited, as they really delighted in the sabbath, thought it more reasonable to begin the day, when their minds and bodies were awake and active, and that this was indeed the will or command of the Lord of the sabbath; but that the inhabitants of the place where he is now visiting, in conformity with their inclination, *remembered* the commencement of *their* sabbath, in the *forgetfulness* of sleep. Whether this supposition were correct, the reader will conjecture for himself.

But whatever may be the views of the inhabitants of the last mentioned place, our Visitant observes that the evening of the last of their working days was the most busy evening in the week. The mechanic's hammer, and the woodman's axe, are heard in all directions. The counter of the shopkeeper is unusually thronged, and women are uncommonly busy in despatching their domestic affairs. All things are full of such labour as our Visitant considered very unsuitable to the evening.

The manner in which the inhabitants spend the morning of the sabbath has already been noticed. Their public exercises have also been briefly reviewed. The rest of the day was spent by some, in carelessly reading a few chapters in the Bible, or a sermon, or a treatise on moral philosophy; by others, in reading newspapers, political pamphlets, essays on various subjects, novels, and works of like description. Many made the afternoon's discourse of their preacher the subject of animated conversation. "Mr. —— did well in giving the inhabitants

of —— a good *trimming*. They deserve it for their *uncharitableness*, hypocrisy, &c." Some sauntered in their gardens, orchards, and fields; some assembled together for a pleasant repast at the tea-table, and for social and brilliant conversation; others were engaged in posting, or otherwise adjusting their accounts; and others were lounging on the sofa or the bed. Some few, in their *usual manner*, offered up the evening sacrifice in their families.

Another circumstance which our Visitant noticed, was, that a considerable portion of the inhabitants attended public worship but one part of the day. Some were detained at home on the former part of the day, for the important purpose of preparing *sabbath day family dinners*.—Others, after despatching these dinners, neglected the afternoon service, from a strange kind of *lethargy* or *stupor*. Besides, a considerable number of the inhabitants, instead of visiting the house of God on either part of the day, were driving away on horseback, or in their carriages, to visit their friends, or to transact

business of *importance*. These people, our Visitant observed, travelled in this manner, and for these purposes, on the sabbath, more than on any other day; nor were the loaded teams and droves of cattle few in number, which he saw moving in the streets, with their drivers. In addition to these things he was informed by unquestionable authority, that collectors of toll at turnpike gates, received generally twice as much "tribute money" on the sabbath, as on any of their working days, and that the toll collectors were hired to refrain their feet from the house of God, for the *important* purpose of collecting the toll exacted of sabbath day travellers!

Our Visitant, not a little shocked at this irreverence and violation of the sabbath, ventured to express his surprise, and his disapprobation of the conduct which in several respects he had noticed. As this day is the sabbath of the Lord your God, said he to several of the most respectable persons in the place; as you are required to "remember and keep it holy, not doing your own ways, nor find-

ing your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words," and as you acknowledge the obligation of this requirement, how am I to account for it, that the day is observed in so lax a manner; and in so many instances, so flagrantly disregarded, as holy time? To this it was replied;—However the day is not regarded by all among us in so decent and religious a manner as could be wished, yet we consider the punctilious and rigid manner in which it is regarded by some, and particularly by the inhabitants of the place which you first visited, to be but a superstitious service, and an affectation of sanctity. "The sabbath is made for man, and not man for the sabbath." The public worship of God on this day we esteem as a valuable institution, and as such, we think it important practically to regard it. This we mean to do; but to make it a day of rigid *discipline* and *penance*, is consistent neither with our *inclination*, nor any article in our creed. The time which is not spent in public worship, or at least a portion of it, we devote to the offices of friendship and social intercourse,

to business of necessity, and occasionally to short excursions for health, and the exhilaration of our spirits. As for the transaction of worldly business in driving teams, and cattle, &c. on this day, we do not approve of it when it can be *well* avoided. These things we really consider evils, which ought to be remedied; and to discountenance them we *exact* toll of travellers, teamers, &c. on *this day;* believing, as we do, that demanding toll of such violators of the sabbath, will in some good degree prevent travelling and worldly business on this day. We not only consider our conduct justifiable, but *highly instrumental to the reformation of morals!* To promote the interest of morality and *rational religion*, is with us a most important object; and to encourage and animate us in this pursuit, our excellent minister spares no pains. He fails not to assure us in the strongest terms, of respectability in this world, and happiness in the next, as the reward of our meritorious exertions. Yea, by line upon line, and precept upon precept, he teaches us that the very devils (if by

the way there be such beings) would mount the skies, if they would cultivate reason and good morals! Although the state of morals and religion among us is not, in all respects, *quite* so good as might be wished, yet we consider it as quite desirable, and as advancing fast to perfectibility. Liberal in our religious sentiments, free from the shackles of bigotry, superstition and enthusiasm, and guarded as we are against the infection of religious fanaticism, we are established in steady habits; we cultivate the social affections; enjoy the cheerful intercourse of society; indulge innocent amusements and conviviality; and with confidence anticipate that plenitude of happiness which, our minister assures us, awaits us in a future world.

To these observations, our Visitant listened in silent and thoughtful attention; but making no reply, he left the group with mingled emotions of grief and astonishment; nor could he forbear exclaiming to himself, Must not the hearts of these men be "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked?" Strangers to

the *power of religion*, they rest in its forms; they embrace a shadow for a substance; they neglect the *Rock* Christ Jesus, and build upon the sand; they forsake the strong hold, and trust in a refuge of lies!

Having gratified his curiosity with respect to the inhabitants of this place, but to the disappointment of his expectation, our Visitant now resolves on another visit, with the hope of making more agreeable discoveries; he accordingly conveys himself with his usual facility to a considerable distance, where, observing a large concourse of people, he alights with the persuasion that some very important enterprise was the object of the assemblage. Mingling with the crowd, that he might learn what so much arrested their attention, he soon found, to his great surprise and chagrin, that several persons on horseback were on the point of riding to a certain distance—*then to ride back again*—and that the multitude had assembled from many miles in all directions to see the wondrous feat. On expressing his astonishment, that the act of riding on

horses should draw together so great a number of spectators, and so highly interest their feelings, he was informed that the horses with their riders were to move with *great speed*. But why should that circumstance, inquired the Visitant, so much interest the feelings of the spectators? Will either the horses or the riders appear more *graceful* by moving rapidly than slowly? Or will the spectators better enjoy a quick motion? Or will . . . No, no, was hastily the reply; you do not understand the business; the horse that first returns will win his owner thousands of dollars. Here ended the dialogue; it was broken off by the starting of the horses, and the shouts of the multitude; and our Visitant was overwhelmed with astonishment, and perplexed with strange conjectures. In the mean time, the horses pursued their course with the velocity of the wind; the ground trembled under their feet, and the air was rent with a peal of shouting. Soon, the coursers were on their return, and if possible, with accelerated speed. Victory to the competitors remained doubtful to nearly the close of

the race, when one of the horses, melting with heat and trembling with the violence of the exertion, fell lifeless beneath his rider; the second by a mis-step stumbled, and dashing the rider on the ground, left him a breathless corpse; the third arrived indeed at the goal, but reeking with sweat, covered with dust, and trembling in every joint, almost to dissolution. The shouts from the multitude are now redoubled, mingled with murmurs, most horrible oaths and execrations. All is confusion and wild uproar. Some thought it was not a fair race; others appeared undetermined; while the *gamblers* insisted on taking the purse. Our Visitant, almost petrified with horror, hastened from the scene. Directing his course he knew not whither, but to escape the tumult, he soon discovered a capacious building, pleasantly situated, near to which, on an elevated sign, he saw in fair characters, the word ENTERTAINMENT. Hither he repaired, with the expectation of finding a peaceful asylum from the tempest he had just escaped. But lo! entering the house, his eyes met several

objects in human form, stretched on the floor and on benches, with pale and haggard, or bloated faces, apparently dead; while he observed others, either staggering or reeling across the rooms, or greedily swallowing strong and *ill scented* liquors. While with astonishment, bordering on stupor, he was witnessing this scene, he was roused from his reverie by the trampling of horses, and a confused sound. The house was soon filled from the race ground, and the call for rum, brandy, gin &c. &c. was heard from many more than could be readily supplied. The several kinds of liquor, however, circulated with great rapidity. This was followed by roars of laughter, vollies of oaths and curses, high and angry threats and "smiting with the fist of wickedness." All was confusion worse confounded. Our Visitant fled with increased disgust, and consternation.

Retiring beyond the reach of noise and riot, he sat down upon a friendly rock, to meditate, to seek repose, and to quiet the tumult of his almost distracted thoughts. In this situation he remained, till he was

surrounded by the shades and damps of evening. To avoid the evils which these threatened, and with a view to find refreshment, and convenient shelter for the night, he repaired to the town; and that he might avoid as much as possible noise and tumult, he sought an obscure and unfrequented house.

Soon he found, as he imagined, the object of his search. He entered the building, and was received with great civility. On being asked, what he would please to command, our Visitant replied that he was desirous of some refreshment, and of the favour of a bed for the night. You shall be gratified, was the answer; when he was conducted into another apartment, handsomely furnished, and exhibiting an air of elegance. This excited in our Visitant no small surprise, as the outside of the building scarcely promised internal neatness: nor was his surprise abated on being addressed by several ladies with cordial welcome, with the appearance of friendship and a forwardness and intimacy of demeanor, which, from strangers, he had not anticipated.

His fair hostesses were elegantly attired, and vied with each other in their polite and courtly attentions. The hospitable table was soon spread, and furnished with delicacies. Of these he partook with gratitude, and his drooping spirits were revived. Pleased with the idea that he was now in the region, and among the friends of benevolence and religion, he ventured to introduce those subjects as topics of conversation, which were congenial to his own feelings, and which he presumed would be to theirs.—But to his astonishment, he observed them gazing upon him for a while with speechless curiosity, which was followed with reiterated bursts of significant and contemptuous laughter. Before he could devise an explanation for the rudeness of their conduct, several gentlemen entered the apartment with an air of great ease and familiarity, and with the same air were received by the ladies. The intimacies between them which soon ensued, convinced our Visitant, that the region and company into which he had fallen, were not so *pure and holy* as he first thought.

For some time he had escaped the observation of the gentlemen, as he had retired, from confusion, to a corner of the room. On being observed by them, they inquired of the ladies, who was the clod-pole they had secreted, and rushing upon him, violently dragged him to the door, hurled him into the street, and loaded him with abuse and execrations, while the fair, *the benevolent*, *the friendly*, *the religious females*, shouted applause.

Stunned with amazement and sore with his bruises, our Visitant, sad and sorrowful, paraded the streets, not knowing whither to direct his course, or where to lay his head. Resolved to enter no building inhabited by man, he at length came to a large edifice, in a very shabby condition. Its open doors invite his entrance. To his great satisfaction, he finds no other inhabitants but the "solemn owl," and other "birds of night." Here he found repose in the arms of sleep, till the morning sun awoke him from the sweet insensibility. The building now exhibited every mark of neglect and decay. Leaving it, he determined to tarry no lon-

ger in a place, where he had seen nothing but vanity, riot and licentiousness. But, as he stood musing, and unresolved whither to go, he was accosted by a man of a grave and venerable appearance, in a courteous and friendly manner. "You seem, Sir," said he, to our Visitant, "to be a stranger in this place. Any assistance you may need, which it is in my power to give, will readily be afforded." Thanking him for his courtesy, the stranger replied, that his visit to the place was, for his own satisfaction, to make observations on the character and manners of the inhabitants, and particularly in relation to the sabbath; but that as he had learnt much in a short time, he intended immediately leaving the place, and was then deliberating in what direction to shape his course. "Could you, sir," continued he, "direct me to any town or region where my observations would be more satisfactory, you would confer on me a great obligation. If too severe, you will have the goodness, sir, to pardon this remark." The venerable personage, for some time remained silent, observing

the stranger with the eye of scrutinizing curiosity. At length he observed—"I am not, sir, an inhabitant of this place, nor has the significancy of your remark on its inhabitants given me offence; it has rather excited my curiosity, and induced the belief, that, although personally strangers to each other, there is an intimacy between our sentiments, feelings and pursuits. Shall I ask of you the favour to repair with me to my temporary lodgings, where you will find refreshment, and where I entertain the hope, that an interview will be mutually interesting and beneficial to us."

The Visitant readily accepted the invitation, and was conducted to a plain, but decent building, where, having been entertained with an agreeable repast, he inquired of his friendly host, whether the place of his permanent residence was at any considerable distance, what had brought him among a people, whose manners and pursuits were so uncongenial to his own; whether he was intimately acquainted with the people? &c. From the answers to these queries, our Visitant

learnt, that his host was an inhabitant of the place which he had first visited; that business of an urgent nature had brought him hither, and that his acquaintance with the inhabitants was considerably extensive, and not less unpleasant than it was intimate and general.

In the course of conversation, he learnt the following particulars, in relation to the inhabitants of the place: That their religious sentiments (if they may be so denominated) embraced almost every thing but the truth; that some of the people were deists, some professed atheists, and that many troubled themselves about no religious sentiments at all; but that all were united in ridiculing and despising every sentiment and every practice that had the stamp of seriousness and devotion.

With relation to their manners and pursuits our Visitant was informed, that they were highly profligate; that a large portion of their time was devoted to horse racing; gambling of various kinds; to stage players, balancing masters, tumblers, merry Andrews, jugglers, fortune

tellers, mountebanks, to sensuality and idleness; that many abandoned themselves to the most horrid profanity, to fraud, theft, drunkenness, quarrelling, and almost every vice and evil that can be named and devised; and that duelling and murder not unfrequently occurred; that the books which were read among them, by those capable of reading, were those of the most romantic, corrupting, and licentious nature; and that the small number of bibles and books of a serious description that were to be found in the place were read more for ridicule and merriment, than for instruction and improvement.

This information, notwithstanding what our Visitant had seen and heard, and *felt* among the inhabitants of the place, he could not but hope represented them in too unfavourable a light. He therefore resolved more fully to satisfy his mind, by a thorough investigation of their character and pursuits; accordingly, he remained in the place till the arrival of the sabbath. During this period, he availed himself of

every opportunity in his power to accomplish the object of his visit.

The result was, that the information communicated to him by his venerable host was far from being of an heightened representation. Grieved, disgusted, and almost petrified with horror, by the unprincipled and flagitious manners of the inhabitants, he was impatient to leave them. But hearing that a preacher had just arrived, who was called, a Missionary, and who, it was expected would preach the next day, (the sabbath) if he could obtain the ears of any of the people, our Visitant resolved to tarry, to hear the preacher, to see what would be his reception, and what would be the effect of his preaching, if he could gain an audience. He accordingly tarried. Sabbath morning arrived, and was uncommonly pleasant. The streets as usual were filled with people, and their pursuits were much the same as they had been on other days. But to the disappointment of our Visitant he observed many of the people in high glee, on account of the preaching with which they were about to be *entertained.*

This for a time encouraged him to hope that some of them were desirous of religious instruction; but he soon found, from their conversation, that a love of novelty, and a disposition to abuse the preacher, and ridicule his preaching, were the principal considerations which occasioned their uncommon flow of spirits, and made them desirous to hear what the babbler had to say.

The time having arrived, when the foreign Visitant expected that religious services would commence, he observed a very considerable number of people directing their course to the large building which had offered him shelter on the first night of his visit to this inhospitable place. Concluding that this was the building where the public exercises were to be performed, he thither directed his steps; but greatly were his eyes and ears offended by the levity, the coarse jokes, and the profanity of the people, as they were hurrying to the place and the exercises which required a far different appearance and demeanor. He soon entered the shabby and neglected building, which he

afterwards learnt, had in former times and better days, been appropriated to the worship of God; and that no inconsiderable number of the inhabitants had been religious and devout worshippers; but, that being grieved with the licentious sentiments, and the still more licentious practices of the inhabitants, they had long since retreated to the place where he made his first visit.

Having entered this ruinous, but once sacred and venerable building, he soon accommodated himself with as convenient a situation as the place could furnish. But what was his indignation, when he observed that the people who had entered, and were entering the house, scarcely maintained any decency of behaviour. Instead of taking their seats with gravity, they were strolling here and there, backwards and forwards, talking of the news of the day, and of the ordinary affairs of life, and concerns of business, as though they had been on 'change, rather than in the house of God. With anxiety our Visitant waited the arrival of the preacher, hoping that his appearance would hush

the tumult into silence. He soon appeared; and with all the meekness and dignity becoming his sacred office. The noise in some measure subsided. The hissing of contempt, the sneer of derision, and the pointing-finger of scorn were, however, to be seen or heard in many parts of the house. The preacher ascended a shattered and tottering eminence, which once bore the name of pulpit. With a mild, but solemn aspect he cast his eyes upon the assembly. He gazed on them with the mingled emotions of astonishment, grief and indignation. This produced no effect. In a calm, but pathetic manner, he addressed them on the impropriety and indecency of their conduct. But all in vain! He ceased to speak. The grief, and working of compassion in his soul forbade utterance to his tongue. His heart was almost ready to burst with the yearnings of commisseration. But soon finding relief by a plentiful gush of tears, he was agreeably surprised to find the assembly struck mute with sympathy and astonishment. Encouraged by this circumstance he immediately introduced the

solemnities of the occasion. In prayer, he was exceedingly devout and solemn. Several in the assembly appeared deeply affected. Prayer being ended, the holy man of God, opening his Bible, read in an emphatical manner the following passage. "Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers, ye serpents, ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell." Making a solemn pause after reading this passage, he at length observed that these were the words of Jesus Christ, who *spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes.* He noticed the occasion of the words, their import and their application. Then in the most forcible and *moving* manner, described the character of Christ, and in a concise but most luminous and cogent method illustrated and supported the truth of the christian scriptures. By the truth of these scriptures, and by the authority of their *divine* Author, he observed to his hearers, he was constrained to say to them,

that their character was but too justly described in the passage he had just been reading; that they were deeply interested in it, and that in their present course, they could not possibly escape the damnation of hell. In the conclusion of his discourse, he entreated and conjured his hearers, in the most persuasive and urgent manner, to search the scriptures; to search their own hearts, and to review their conduct that they might be convinced that these things were really so; to embrace the truth; to exercise unfeigned and deep repentance towards God; to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and immediately to return from their abominations to the God of infinite mercy, that he might pardon their sins, sanctify their hearts, and receive them into favour.

His manner being uniformly tender and impressive, yet dignified and solemn, with words flowing from the heart, he could scarcely fail to persuade his hearers to become religious.

Of him might a Cowper say

"There stands the messenger of truth: there stands
The Legate of the skies! His theme divine,

His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated law speaks out
Its thunders; and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the gospel whispers peace."

The effect upon his auditors was various; some of them were filled with indignation, gnashed upon him with their teeth, *contradicted* and *blasphemed*. Others rushed out of the house, exclaiming that they would no longer hear the babbler, who was a fit subject for Bedlam, a setter forth of strange Gods, and who endeavoured *to turn the world upside down*. Some "grinned horribly a ghastly smile." Others seemed stupified with amazement. Some trembled, and others wept. The scene was strikingly singular, tumultuary, interesting, and impressive.

Such were the prominent features of the exercises and events of the morning. The afternoon exercises were accompanied with more pleasing and encouraging circumstances. Although a number, who attended on the solemnities of the morning, were now absent, yet a greater number of new faces were to be seen. To his surprise our Visitant found the house

thronged with people, who in general conducted with decency. Many appeared eager to hear the preacher, and some to be deeply affected. The preacher, after addressing the throne of divine grace in a solemn manner, made an affecting exordium, and then read the following words, as the foundation of his discourse, "*To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*" His manner of treating the subject, seemed sufficient to carry conviction to the most obstinate mind, to melt the most *obdurate* heart, and to reform the most profligate life. His discourse was not without effect. But little levity was to be seen in the assembly. A general seriousness prevailed. On the countenances of many were impressed the marks of deep anxiety, and some were dissolved in tears. The exercises being closed, many of the people remained, unwilling to retire. The preacher availing himself of this circumstance, devoted a considerable time to serious conference with them. He addressed their consciences, in words the most weighty and pungent. They were apparently ac-

companied with the convincing operations of the Divine Spirit to the souls of a considerable number, who could not forbear anxiously to cry, "Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?" Whither, O whither shall we fly, from the wrath to come, from the holy frowns of an angry God! *How can we escape the damnation of hell! Lord! save us, or we perish!* Such was the desirable appearance of the afternoon meeting.

So deeply interested was the foreign Visitant in the events of this day, and so highly were his expectations raised, that their effects would be lasting and happy, that he resolved to protract his visit, and continue his observations. This he did to his unspeakable satisfaction, as he soon witnessed a most astonishing revolution in the sentiments, feelings, and pursuits of many of the inhabitants. Many were hopefully brought to the *knowledge and acknowledgment of the truth as it is in Jesus*, through the indefatigable exertions of the zealous missionary. They gave the most pleasing evidence of a real change of heart, by an abandonment of their for-

mer evil deeds, and by living soberly, righteously and godly.

The foreign Visitant, before he left the earth, made the following communication as the result of his observations, and as expressive of his views of the inhabitants. That those of the place which he first visited, were sincere believers in the existence, perfections, and authority of God; that they unfeignedly believed in the Bible, as the word of God; and making it the rule of their faith and practice, truly devoted themselves to the service of God; particularly, that the sabbath was their delight, that they made it their object to sanctify this day and keep it holy, in deed and in truth; and that at all times their aim was *whether they ate, or drank, or whatever they did, to do all to the glory of God:* In a word, that they were in a good measure what they professed to be, the real friends and servants of God; and of course, that of all men they were in the most eligible and happy situation in this world, and that by the mercy of God, through the merits of their Divine Redeemer, they would be un-

speakably and everlastingly happy in the world to come. That the inhabitants of the place which he next visited, while they had in some measure the form of godliness, denied the power of it; that their views of God, of his government of the world, of the depravity of man, of the character of Christ, of the work of redemption, as the foundation of acceptance with God, of repentance and faith, of the sabbath, and of their duty, were, in general, extremely incorrect, loose and incoherent, and that their conduct of course was equally so; that although the forms of religious worship which they observed, might contribute to their welfare in this world, they would not be available to their benefit in the world to come; and that *trusting in themselves, that they were righteous, and despising others*, more hope was to be entertained of *publicans and harlots* than of them.

The views of our visitant respecting the inhabitants of the place which he last visited were thus expressed: That although their licentiousness in principle was in a great measure the occasion of their licen-

tiousness in practice; and that notwithstanding their licentiousness in practice cast a baleful shade over their temporal prosperity, and was destructive of all the tender charities, and social enjoyments of life, yet that their situation had not opposed so formidable a barrier to conviction and a real change of heart and life, as the situation of those who maintained some of the forms of religion, while their hearts were obdurately opposed to the spirit and power of it; that notwithstanding when he first came among them, they seemed to be in a hopeless condition, with respect to real reformation, yet, that in many instances they were not irrecoverable; that God was able, through the *foolishness of preaching*, to change their hearts, reform their lives, and save their souls from destruction; and that the friends of God, instead of despairing of the salvation of the most profligate, and abandoned of men, should make the most vigorous exertions by sending missionary laborers among them, and by supplying them every other means which promise to be instrumental in turning them

from the error of their ways, and saving their precious souls from hell; and that to these exertions, it becomes them to add fervent and importunate prayers to Him, who alone can give success.*

* In the preceding paragraphs, the foreign Visitant has expressed sentiments which appear to correspond with those of Dr. Doddridge, Mr. Poole, and Mr. Cowper, on the same subject.—The former gives the meaning of Math. xxi. 31. in the following paraphrase: "Then Jesus said to them, the application is easy; for thus it is, that notwithstanding your professions of regard to God, yet in your practice you are disobedient children, and reject his gospel; and verily I say unto you, that even the most abandoned sinners of the age, such as the publicans and common prostitutes, are much more open to conviction, and more likely to be wrought upon than you, and so many of them have already been awakened to repentance, that their example might lead you the way into the kingdom of God; but with all your pretences to sanctity you will not follow them. For though you have not integrity enough to own it, you know in your consciences, that John came not unto you in a suspicious manner, but in the way of righteousness, and did in all his ministry maintain the uniform character of an upright and pious man, as well as of a plain and awakening preacher, yet you believed him not; but the

Should the reader be disposed to consider the foregoing narrative as fabulous,

publicans and harlots, of whom I spake, believed him: and you were still so obstinate, that even when you saw it, and perceived a growing reformation amongst the most abandoned of mankind, yet you did not afterwards repent so as to believe in him."

Mr. Poole says, "It is a hard thing to convince a moral, righteous, civil man that he lacks any thing to salvation; and hence it is, that profane persons many times repent, and believe and are saved, when others perish in their impenitency and unbelief, because they think that they have no need of repentance or any further righteousness, than they are possessed of."

"What is all righteousness that men devise,
What but a sordid bargain for the skies?
But Christ as soon will abdicate his own
As stoop from heaven to sell the proud a throne."
COWPER.

Of the self-righteous the Poet says,

"Perish the virtue, as it ought, abhor'd,
And the fool with it who insults his Lord.
Th' atonement a Redeemers love has wrought
Is not for you: the righteous need it not.
Of all that wisdom dictates, this the drift,
That man is dead in sin; and life a gift."

The fact is, mere moral, as well as immoral sinners, will be lost, unless they repent, and are

the writer will not be dissatisfied with him, provided, he will not overlook the moral, or design of it.

Should the reader object to the fable, as unnatural and incongruous, because it represents the three different classes of men as collected into three distinct and separate societies, the writer will not contend with him on account of his objection, provided he will admit, that the characters included in those several classes, are to be found among us and around us, however they may be dispersed and intermixed.

Should the reader object to the fable because he may think that the characters of the several classes of men, which it exhibits, are wrought with too high a coloring, the writer is not unwilling he should consider his objection just, provided, he will not avail himself of it, to his own disadvantage, or the disadvantage of others. If he will not place his depen-

renewed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, and keep his commands from good motives. None must sin that grace may abound.

dance on the form of religion, but imbibe and cherish the spirit and power of it; if he will *deny all ungodliness and every worldly lust;* if he will but suitably *remember the sabbath day to keep it holy;* if he will but do *whatever his hands find to do with his might*, in the cause of God, and for the good of his fellow men, in the christian character, the acorn will become a great tree, and the writer will be abundantly satisfied.

"REMEMBER

THE SABBATH DAY

TO KEEP IT HOLY."

Such is the solemn order of Him, in whose hands our breath is, and whose are all our ways; and he is one who will not be mocked, and cannot be either escaped or resisted. His bounty permits us to spend six days in our worldly labour; not that a good man will forget his Maker for a single hour; but the seventh day is the Lord's by a peculiar claim; on it he rested from his work, when he had finished the earth, the heavens, and all their host. We are informed also, that he hallowed it; that is, made it holy; —fixed it as the season when the tribute of gratitude and adoration should be paid him by the joyful multitude. Shall a man rob God? Or has God withdrawn his claim? No; he appears by an ordi-

nance lasting as the sun and moon to have demanded the seventh part of our time for his immediate service and glory. Yet, is there no mercy in this appointment? Has he no respect to your advantage? Yes; much every way. Be assured, he needs neither your services nor you. You can neither shake nor establish his throne. It is for *your sake* that he appoints a sabbath; it is then that he meets you with more abundant instruction: thousands adore him in heaven for the appointment, which, while they sojourned on the earth, became the means of preparing them for their high abode; and are there not tens of thousands, either here or in the world of darkness, whose neglect of such advantages has led them on to a character perfected in guilt; and to a state that ushers in the midnight of despair?

Acknowledge then the love of God. He hath *blessed* the sabbath day. It is a day of special grace. The immortal King prepares inexpressible delights for those who keep it holy; he is well-pleased when his creatures pay this mark

of reverence and subjection; he will bless them eminently; and you know not how many more of these bright opportunities shall dawn. To *you* it may be, the last has already set, or is at this moment setting. Oh! look, before you sink into the gloom of death; look to the mercy of God in Jesus, and say, "Lord, it is enough, fain would I rebel no longer, subdue and pardon me at once." If such a prayer ascended from your heart, we should have every thing to hope. No more would you mispend a sabbath, either by unnecessary absence from public worship, or by unsuitable employment on returning from it. You would anxiously inquire—"Where can I find the faithful minister who cares for my soul, and will feed it with the bread of life?" Having found one, you would prove your gratitude by the constancy of your attendance, by aiming to fix in your memory the truths imparted; and by praying over the services of the day. You would not exclaim, "What a weariness it is to serve the Lord!" You would find no temptation to ask, "Where

is the harm, if I spend a part of the day in some diversions?" Your conscience would suggest, that as far as you did so, you ceased to keep the day holy; reason might tell you that those diversions would effectually blot out the solemnities you had quitted; and a still higher principle would create such a preference for religious duties, that you would treat every thing which invited you away, not as a pleasing amusement, but as a deadly foe.

It is well for you, that you live in a country where the sabbath is respected. We speak not of the manner, in which it is to be feared, the greater part express this respect; but of the opportunities that offer to those who are willing. Some are undoubtedly less favoured than others, but there are few, especially in cities, towns, and their neighbourhoods, who are entirely without opportunities; and even those who are farther removed from public ordinances, whose families confine them principally to the house, and whose situations there, are the least favourable to religion; even such may manifest

their good will. Let them so much the more abound in reading the scriptures and in secret prayer. Perhaps the Lord of the sabbath may remove the hindrances; or if he please, the word of life shall be brought nearer to them, or their incumbrances shall lessen, or what is better than all, their family connexions shall become like-minded with themselves. And who so likely to obtain this enlargement of privileges, as those who make the best use of privileges already in their possession?

Mournful as the neglect of a sabbath is, and widely as the crime prevails, let us be thankful that the sabbath still exists, and that there are persons who know its value. It was well observed by Archbishop Sharp, that, "were it not for that happy institution, we should hardly see any face of religion among us; and, in a little time, should scarcely be distinguished from heathen." A sabbath! it is the Christians' feast day. It brings into view every thing that purifies, consoles, exalts, and makes happy.—With angels he celebrates thereon the creation

of the world, and the resurrection of his divine Saviour. His affections towards his fellow worshippers are drawn into lively exercise; he feels himself to be their kinsman, he shares with them the enjoyments of divine communion, and learns how to improve all the remaining days of the week. As the morning approaches, his happy soul meets it with a welcome, and were he to speak, it would be in language like what we borrow from the poet:

"Another six days work is done,
Another Sabbath is begun;
Return, my soul, enjoy the rest,
Improve the day thy God has blest.

Come, bless the Lord, whose love assigns,
So sweet a rest to wearied minds;
Provides an antepast of Heav'n,
And gives this day the food of seven.

Oh, that our thoughts and thanks may rise,
As grateful incense to the skies:
And draw from Heaven that sweet repose,
Which none, but he that feels it, knows.

This heav'nly calm within the breast,
Is the dear pledge of glorious rest;
Which, for the church of God remains,
The end of cares—the end of pains.

With joy, great God, thy works we view,
In various scenes, both old and new;
With praise we think on mercies past,
With hope we future pleasure taste.

In holy duties let the day
In holy pleasures pass away;
How sweet a sabbath thus to spend,
In hope of one that ne'er shall end!"

THE END.